



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
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02/25/2010 Minutes

February 25, 2010
 Whittemore Robbins House

Final and Approved Minutes

**Commissioners
 Present:**

B. Cohen, D. Levy, S. Makowka, M. Penzenik, T. Smurzynski,
 J. Worden

**Commissioners
 Not Present:**

M. Hope Berkowitz, A. Frisch, M. Kramer, M. Logan, M. Potter

Guests:

R. Sampson, M. Sampson, D. Larsen, P. Hedlund, J. Mishkin,
 N. Mishkin

1. AHDC Meeting Opens 8:00pm
 2. Appointment of alternate Commissioners for Central Street: B. Cohen, D. Levy, T. Smurzynski, S. Makowka
- Approval of minutes from December 17, 2009 and January 28, 2010. J. Worden moved approval of 12/17, seconded by B. Cohen, approved unanimously, J. Worden moved approval of amended minute from January 28, 2010, seconded by B. Cohen, approved unanimously.
 - Communications
 - Call re: 7 Central Street Sign (Application Submitted – Hearing Tonight)
 - Notice to residents on Pleasant Street re: Cell Tower @ Route 2 and Pleasant, Belmont. S. Makowka discussed Arlington Advocate article discussing this project.
 - Emails by resident to S. Makowka re: 6 Jason Street Antennae Installation Proposal
 - 2009 AHDC Annual Report sent to Town Manager's Office
 - AHDC Application for 88 Westminster Ave.(Ryan) - CONA Issued by S. Makowka
 - Request for abutters list for 159 Pleasant Street (MacArthur) by Planning Dept.
 - Request for plaque at 45 Jason Street (referred to AHC)
 - Update re: Proposed Route 2/Pleasant St Cell tower
 - Cooks Hollow which abuts the Russell Historic District has a feasibility study being undertaken by the town. S. Makowka looking for feedback – one possibility is having a memorial area for cremation remains
 - J. Worden received call from Finance Committee about the budget and was asked if it was acceptable for us to have same amount of money as last year - \$5,100. He said OK.

- Email from S. Makowka listing projects that have been completed. A list of these projects to be attached to the end of this month's minutes and removed from future agendas

5. New Business

Hearings

8:20pm

• Formal Hearing re: 7 Central Street for sign installation

Rich and Martha Sampson, owners of old Police Station building with multiple tenants in commercial office space. Applicants want sign out front which does better job of alerting clients of tenants. Dave Larsen is sign maker hired by applicant and he stated that he has checked our regulations already. He explained that he tried to keep historical design as opposed to anything contemporary with the only difference being that it's all new materials that are not going to warp. Applicant provided pictures of the proposed sign and its location. J. Worden asked if the sign could be moved to the right to cover up the metal electrical box located in front of the building. R. Sampson said the doors open to the front and it wouldn't be possible. R. Sampson explained that the black area of the sign, as shown in the drawings, would be HDU (high density urethane) material, not wood. The grey portions around the black area are made out of aluminum which he asserted would have the look of 2-2" painted wood. The attachments for the tenant panels will go through the carved sign and be secured in to the back of this aluminum structure. J. Worden asked about posts – was told they were all aluminum. J. Worden stated that we would normally approve wooden posts per our guidelines although substitutes could be considered if they would fit the appearance. He was concerned that metal post would not have a wood texture. R. Sampson explained that the paint would be 2 part urethane enamel that doesn't fade, chip – the only thing tougher would be power coated. In response to Commissioners questions about use of hand-painted lettering, R. Sampson stated that hand-painted letters don't last as long as the vinyl signs especially with no glass in front of them.

The Commissioners discussed the fact that this particular sign is not going in front of a typical residential structure in the District, this is in front of a large brick building. B. Cohen asked what is wrong with not pretending it's wood and just putting a metal sign in this location. Not a Victorian house, not at a prime location, has replacement windows already. S. Makowka doesn't want to set a precedent accepting that painted metal looks "like wood". This is a unique situation in a historic district, doesn't want the record to reflect that this is a perfect substitute for wood that would be appropriate in other locations. M. Penzenik said in light of what was said about the period of the building this sign is too "Colonial-esque" to be on that location. D. Levy said he agrees and would be in favor of taking finials off the posts, thus simplifying the sign. B. Cohen reiterated that given the nature of the building, she is not fixated on wood. S. Makowka asked about the possibility of setting it closer to the street, cutting out the shrubs and putting it in front of the electrical box.

S. Makowka asked for public comments. P. Hedlund, who lives across the street, thinks Rich and American Alarm are really good neighbors. He likes keeping the sign back from the sidewalk which is in line with what he has done across the street to define the edge with a fence. He suggested that putting the sign where the flower box currently is might direct people closer to working entrance which is the side door not the original front door. He stated that people come from both directions. A question was asked about using a double sided sign set perpendicular to the sidewalk. R. Sampson stated that it would be difficult to make a double-sided sign as nice as this since connections for tenant panels would be visible. P. Hedlund asked what was happening with the existing tree. Answer: there are two, the one on left is quite overgrown and will be coming down. Question from J. Mishkin about what is goal of Commission with regard to the building and the area. S. Makowka explained that the Commission looked at the structure, where it is situated, and the context to the building all affect the location in order to ensure that the proposed change is not incongruous.

S. Makowka suggested that, per its guidelines, the Commission needed to see samples of the proposed materials. He also asked the applicant to revisit a couple of options for the location and orientation of the sign. M. Penzenik stressed that they look at the scale of sign suggesting that a sign that's 9 feet tall and 5 feet wide in this location is huge. R. Sampson asked if it would be better to lower the sign at the expense of the hedge. Response: minimizing the size of the sign would make it better. M. Penzenik said maybe turn it 90 degrees, and relocate it by the actual entrance. S. Makowka restated the Commission is looking to the applicant to – 1) provide samples of materials, 2) think about orientations of sign, 3) try to make sign less massive in scale to fit in with the neighborhood. This is a commercial building, so the design doesn't have to be the same that would be used at a more residential location. D. Levy commented that he would prefer that hedge stay and wherever sign does that it be behind the hedge, even if sign is taller, but should be able

to get sign down to 6 or 7 feet. If posts were black it would be less obvious as well – white posts make it stand out too much. In terms of vandalism the closer to the street, the more potential threat. The Commission and applicant discussed other examples that might offer design alternatives including one at the water treatment plant on So. Border Road in Winchester that is of industrial quality but still has a nice look. Applicants will take pictures of other installed examples and mail them to us to look before the next meeting. Applicant provided consent to continue hearing. Will be placed 1st on agenda for next month.

6. Other Business

- S. Makowka noted a request by executive secretary C. Greeley to be paid via monthly stipend instead of hourly rate. He had discussions with comptroller indicating that such a change was allowable subject to Commission approval. Town disbursement records for the past several years reveal a monthly average amount paid of \$162 monthly. For the record, S. Makowka wants it noted that C. Greeley puts many more hours than ever paid, often working in small chunks of time (responding to emails or phone calls) that are difficult and time consuming to track. S. Makowka suggested that the Commission approve payment of a \$175 monthly stipend for the position of executive secretary with understanding that we will take account of the time and compensate appropriately any time devoted to a significant special project performed at the Commission's request. J. Worden moved that we change to that method, seconded by B. Cohen. The Commission voted unanimously to adopt that approach effective November 1, 2009. S. Makowka noted that the Commission will still need to approve a statement monthly.
- New Officers Update - Nomination of current slate – S. Makowka, chairman; B. Cohen, vice-chair, J. Worden, secretary - for remainder of year – moved by T. Smurzynski, seconded by M. Penzenik, voted unanimously.
- State Ethics Exam – J. Worden reported that the State Ethics Commission wants all public officials to complete an ethics course, either online or at the clerk's office. S. Makowka reported that he had talked with C. Kowalski about this requirement and learned that she was anticipating feedback from Town Counsel. S. Makowka will be in communication with folks when we hear back.
- Discussion of Fees for AHDC Projects – S. Makowka stated that we do spend a lot of time when big projects come in, but that he would not want to anything that discourages residents from submitting materials for relatively small projects. Don't want to make it a hassle which could encourage owners to make changes illegally. He suggested that one approach would be to charge fees for additions over a certain square footage and for new houses. S. Makowka will work up a strawman based loosely on the Conservation Commissions schedule of fees for next meeting
- New Commissioners: S. Makowka reported that we had received two initial applicants for seats on Commissions and that he had talked directly with both individuals: David Baldwin and Jonathan Nyberg. After discussion of their backgrounds and qualifications, B. Cohen moved that the Commissions forward a request that both be appointed to at-large positions by the Board of Selectmen. D. Levy seconded, all voted unanimously to recommend the two for At-large Commissioner seats recently vacated. S. Makowka noted that at third indication of interest had been received and that we would follow-up pending the resolution of our outreach to the Jason/Gray District for a new representative

7. Old Business

- a. Preservation Loan Program Update
- b. Outreach to Neighborhoods & Realtors
- d. Status of projects by monitors

Meeting Adjourned 9:52pm

Carol Greeley
Executive Secretary

cc: HDC Commissioners
Arlington Historical Commission, JoAnn Robinson and Richard Duffy, Co-Chairs
Building Inspector, Mr. Michael Byrne
Building Dept., Richard Vallarelli
Planning Dept. and Redevelopment Board, Ms. Carol Kowalski
Massachusetts Historical Commission
Town Clerk
Robbins Library
MIS Department

Text of Email received from S. Makowka to C. Greeley (cc'd to J. Worden) on Feb. 25, 2010 at carol.greeley@gmail.com:

Carol, These can be removed from the review list:

03-18M
04-3G
05-28M
05-33M
05-34P
06-07M
06-10M
06-17P
06-27M
06-38R
06-44P
07-01P
07-06A
07-07P
07-12P
07-13M
07-33P
07-39M
07-42R
07-46P
07-47J (listed twice remove both)
07-45P
07-57P
08-04M
08-12M
08-13R
08-16P
08-18M
08-21M
08-22R
08-25R
08-26P
08-37B
08-38A
08-42P

08-43P
09-01J
09-08R
09-14P
09-15J
09-18R
09-19R
09-23R
09-36M
09-37J